

Blue Water Bridge Plaza Study

Public Hearing

PUBLIC HEARING

Tuesday, October 9, 2007
McMorran Place
701 McMorran Blvd
Port Huron

Open House

3:00-8:30 p.m.

Presentations

4:00 and 6:30 p.m.

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UNABLE TO ATTEND?

If you have questions or concerns, call our toll-free project hotline @ 800.955.3515 or log on to the project website:
www.michigan.gov/bluewaterbridgeproject

Tuesday, October 9, 2007
McMorran Place
Port Huron, MI 48060

This public hearing is your opportunity to voice your opinion regarding the Blue Water Bridge Plaza Study in Port Huron, Michigan. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is seeking your comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the United States Inspection Plaza at the Blue Water Bridge.

The public hearing will use an "open forum" style and include a project presentation and public comment opportunity. This informal type of hearing allows the public to stop in anytime during the scheduled hours, gather facts on the study, and speak with members of the Michigan Department of Transportation study team.

A court reporter will be available to record oral comments. Participants wishing to comment about the study may do so at any time during the hearing. Citizens can also fill out a comment form and deposit it into the comment boxes at the public hearing site.

All written or recorded comments will appear in the transcript of this public hearing. Comments can also be mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to the address on the back of this brochure.

The DEIS public record



will be open for comments until November 5, 2007. We urge citizens to let MDOT know their views on the proposed project.

By January 2008, a copy of the complete transcript including all of the written and recorded oral comments received will be available for public review at the document review sites listed on page 2 of this brochure.

All comments will be shared with MDOT and the Federal Highway Administration.



Purpose and Need for Improvements

The goal of the Blue Water Bridge Plaza Study is to develop a 2030 plan of improvements for the plaza and the I-94/I-69 Corridor. The reasons for the improvements to the plaza and corridor are as follows:

- Accommodate the latest Customs and Border Protection inspection technologies and procedures
- Provide flexibility to accommodate future unknown inspection technologies and procedures
- Improve security
- Provide facilities that ensure cars and trucks do not leave the plaza without being inspected
- Improve safety on the bridge, plaza, and I-94/I-69
- Minimize backups on Highway 402 in Canada and I-94/I-69 in the United States
- Reduce vehicle and pedestrian conflicts on the plaza and along the I-94/I-69 Corridor
- Accommodate projected 2030 traffic growth and potential future facility needs
- Improve access between the plaza and the Port Huron area
- Minimize routing of commercial traffic to local roads during maintenance operations
- Create a more visible and accessible Welcome Center

These reasons attempt to address key issues associated with the plaza that include: (1) security issues (2) traffic growth, (3) traffic backups, (4) introduction of new inspection technology, (5) additional space for brokers and inspection agents, (6) traffic conflicts and crash history, and (7) transportation connections between the plaza and local roads.

What is in the DEIS?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires MDOT and FHWA to evaluate many categories of potential social, economic, and natural environmental impacts for the alternatives under consideration.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement discusses in detail, the various impacts associated with each of the alternatives. A summary of the impacts is contained in the matrix on page 5.

Other key impacts discussed in the DEIS and not included in the matrix are; potentially contaminated sites, water quality impacts, and aesthetic and visual appearance issues.

The DEIS is available for review at the following locations:

- St. Clair County Library
- City of Port Huron, Office of the City Clerk
- St. Clair County Planning Office
- Fort Gratiot Township
- Port Huron Township
- MDOT Port Huron Transportation Service Center
- MDOT Region Office in Southfield

- MDOT Bureau of Transportation Planning in Lansing

The DEIS is also available on compact disc (CD) and may be viewed on the Internet at: www.michigan.gov/bluewaterbridgeproject.



Providing adequate space to accommodate the latest inspection technology and procedures is a primary need for improvements on the Blue Water Bridge Plaza.

Next Steps

Following compilation of the public hearing transcript and comments from the public and resource agencies, MDOT will develop a Recommended Alternative, and then begin the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

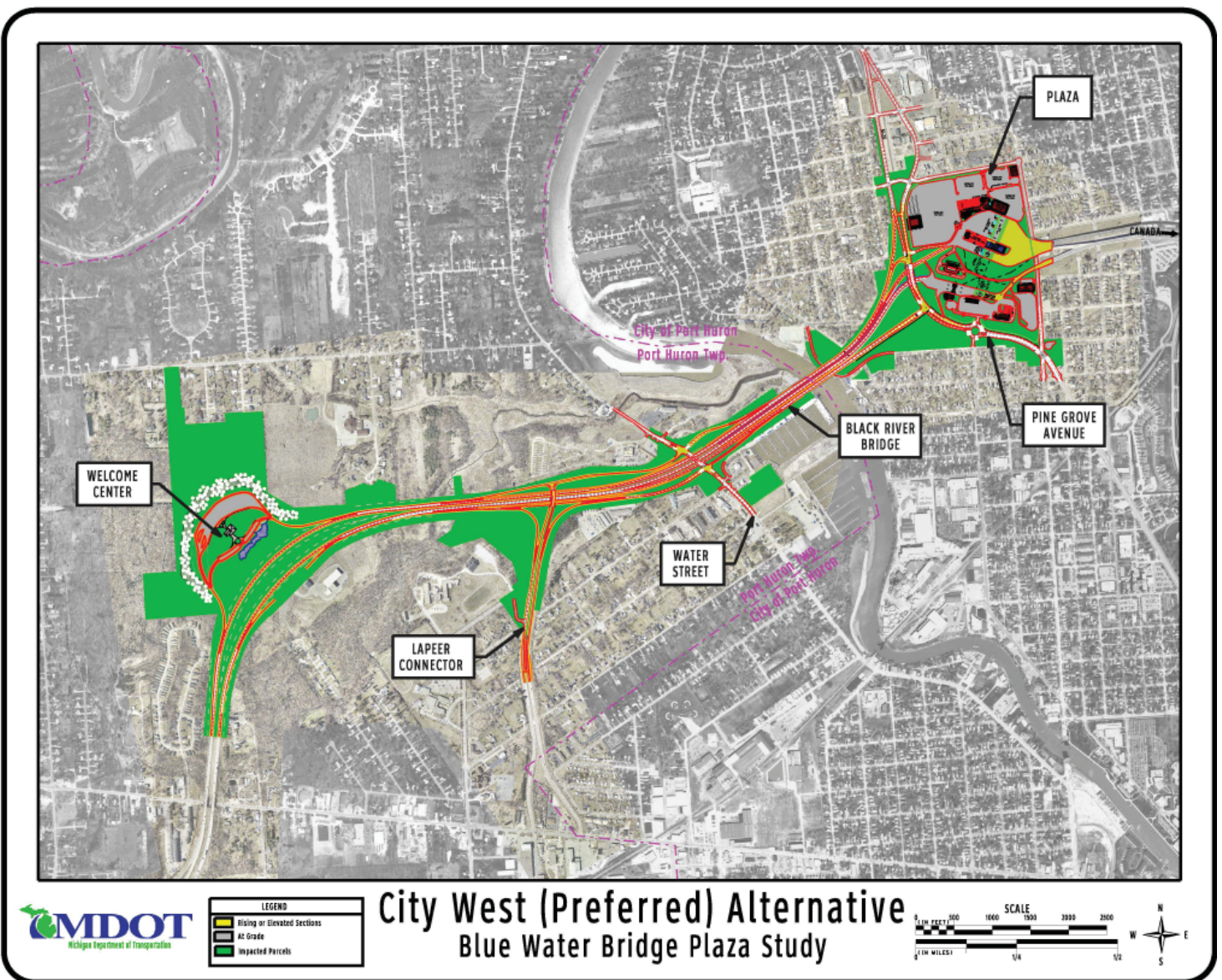
Public and agency comments will help guide the development of the final alternative which will be carried forward into the design and construction phases.

The FEIS will provide responses to all comments received. The FEIS will be publicly avail-

able in spring 2008.

A Record of Decision will be issued by FHWA, identifying the final alternative for design and eventual construction if a Build Alternative is selected.

Following the receipt of environmental clearance, MDOT, U.S. General Services Administration, U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Federal Highway Administration will move forward with design and Right of Way (ROW) phases. The earliest construction could begin in 2010.



The City West Alternative is the Preferred Alternative for the Blue Water Bridge Plaza Study. Each of the alternatives and their potential impacts is discussed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Alternatives

No-Build Alternative

- No changes to the existing plaza configuration or ramps
- MDOT and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) would continue to maintain the existing plaza facilities
- New technology and procedures would be introduced to the greatest extent possible on the existing plaza footprint
- Existing Welcome Center would remain in current location

City East Alternative

- Requires 67 acres for an expanded plaza within the City of Port Huron
- Requires a total of 133 acres for improvements along I-94/I-69 Corridor including the relocation of the Welcome Center
- Requires 155 residential and 34 business relocations
- Pine Grove Avenue would be relocated to the east along 10th Avenue and bring the plaza down to street level
- Pine Grove Avenue would be re-routed to the east of the existing plaza, between Hancock Street and Scott Avenue
- Pine Grove Avenue and 10th Avenue would merge for a joint five-lane road between Scott Avenue and Elmwood Street
- The City East Alternative uses the block between Hancock Street and the existing plaza west of Pine Grove Avenue for an expanded truck inspection area
- The Black River Bridge and Water Street Interchange would be widened and rebuilt
- The Lapeer Connector Interchange would be expanded to provide access in all directions
- A new MDOT Welcome Center would be constructed north of I-94/I-69 in Port Huron Township, replacing the existing Welcome Center at Water Street

City West Alternative (Preferred Alternative)

- Expands plaza within the City of Port Huron to 65 acres
- Requires 131 acres of right-of-way for both the plaza and the I-94/I-69 corridor improvements
- Requires 129 residential and 30 business relocations
- Pine Grove Avenue would be relocated west of the plaza
- Relocated Pine Grove Avenue would wrap around the south and west sides of the new plaza
- Near Hancock Street, the relocated Pine Grove Avenue would split into separate northbound and southbound lanes. Northbound lanes would turn back east and connect to existing Pine Grove Avenue at Riverview Street. Southbound lanes would follow the existing M-25 Connector
- The City West Alternative would use the block bounded by 10th Avenue, Hancock Street, the M-25 Connector, and the existing plaza for expanded inspection and plaza facilities
- The same improvements shown in the City East Alternative would be made for the I-94/I-69 Corridor

Township Alternative

- Relocates major plaza functions to Port Huron Township, 1.5 miles west of the current facility. This site would also include a new MDOT Welcome Center
- Would provide CBP with 103 acres for plaza
- Would require 195 acres of new right-of-way from areas within both the City of Port Huron and Port Huron Township to construct
- Requires 56 residential and 29 business relocations
- Existing I-94/I-69 lanes west of plaza would be converted to a 20-foot walled, secure route to take vehicles between the new plaza and the Blue Water Bridge. The M-25 Connector would be extended to provide a local access road parallel to the existing I-94/I-69 with full access to Water Street and the Lapeer Connector
- The Black River Bridge would be replaced and expanded from four lanes to ten lanes
- Local traffic would no longer be able to exit at the existing plaza or use Pine Grove Avenue to access the plaza

Summary of Impacts

No-Build

City East Alternative

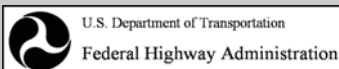
City West Alternative
(Preferred Alternative)

Township Alternative

Potential Impacts:

Social	Public Recreational Land Impacts	None	1	1	0
	Neighborhoods / Subdivision Impacts	0	3	3	3
	Community Facilities (Churches, Schools etc.) (#)	0	1 Church, requires property from school district	1 Church, requires property from school district	Requires property from school district
Relocations	Estimated Residential Relocations (#)	0	155	129	56
	Estimated Commercial Relocations (#)	0	34	30	29
	Existing DTE Substation	No	Yes	Yes	No
River/Stream/Drain Crossings (#)		0	2	2	3
Ecological Resources	Total Wetland Impacts (acres)	0	4.36	4.36	10.16
	Threatened and Endangered Species Impacts	0	0	0	0
Cultural Resources	Historic Buildings/Site Impacts (#)	0	0	1	0
	Archaeological Site Impacts (#)	0	0	0	0
Noise	Residences Impacted by noise levels that exceed noise abatement criteria	101	73	45	66
Potential Contaminated Site Impacts (# of Sites Impacted)		0	20	20	10
Traffic Movement	Grade Separations (#)	8	9	8	15
	New or Modified Signalized Intersections/Roundabouts (#)	0	9	8	6
	Local Road Closures, Rerouting, or Cul de Sacs (#)	0	13	11	6
Right-of-Way	CBP plaza space (including existing plaza re-use) (acres)	18	67	65	103
	Total new right-of-way required (acres)	0	133	131	195
Cost	Construction Cost (\$2007 Millions)	\$0	\$237	\$232	\$244
	Right-of-Way Cost (\$2007 Millions)	\$0	\$150	\$158	\$150
	Total Construction and Right-of-Way Cost (\$2007 Millions)	\$0	\$387	\$390	\$394
	Contingencies Cost (\$2007 Millions)	\$0	\$44	\$43	\$47
	Total Estimated Cost (\$2007 Millions)	\$0	\$431	\$433	\$441

Blue Water Bridge Plaza Study



For More Information:

Call the toll-free project hotline: 800.955.3515
Visit the MDOT project website:
www.michigan.gov/bluewaterbridgeproject

Meet with project staff

When:

The first and third Fridays of the month
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Where:

MDOT Port Huron Transportation Service Center
2127 11th Avenue
Port Huron

Call the hotline to set up an appointment, however, walk-ins are welcome!

Contact:

Please mail, fax or email comments to:

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Public Hearings Officer
Project Planning Division
Michigan Department of Transportation
425 W. Ottawa St.
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